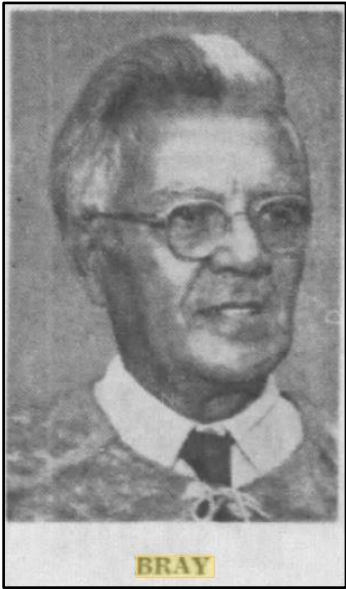


David “Daddy” Kaonohiokala Bray

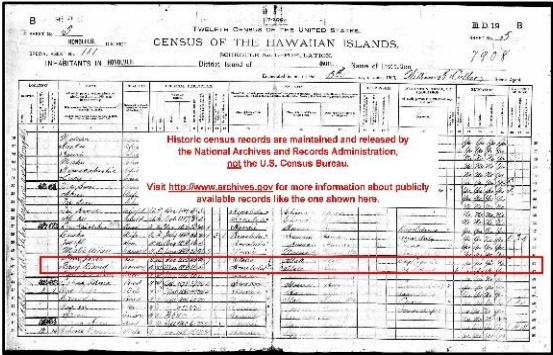
Giving a Hawaiian Voice to the Census

The U.S. Census Bureau has always highlighted American diversity through its decennial snapshots of the population. As the United States grew and the population became more diverse, the Census Bureau’s workforce adapted to represent the country’s people and needs. As immigration from non-European countries increased in the 19th century, the Census Bureau tried to hire enumerators that lived in the neighborhoods and spoke the language. Others became a part of the operations in Washington, DC. From the first surges of Chinese immigration into California in the 19th century, immigrants of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage have long contributed to the Census Bureau’s mission, both at headquarters and in the field.



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2 August 1964

David Kaonohiokala Bray was born on March 5, 1889, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to David Hitchcock and Hana Bray. David’s mother, who



David Bray’s 1900 Census
Living with his Aunt and Uncle

died six months after he was born, was descended from great Hawaiian *kahunas* (shaman or expert) like Holoa’e, who served King Kamehameha the Great, and Pa’ao, a Tahitian priest who was hugely influential in 13th century Hawaii. David’s father, a missionary, was the son of a Hindu-English seaman and a Hawaiian woman. With the passing of his mother, David was adopted by his aunt, Luika Kahalaopuna, also a *kahuna*, who sent him to the Kamehameha School for Boys, a Christian school where he graduated in 1909. Two of David’s early mentors were also Kuamo’o, a son of King Kamehameha the Great, and his son, William H. Kaniho, who taught David the ways of a

kahuna. In 1910, David married Lydia Maunahina Dusson and together they would have six children, while mentoring several others. Locals honored them with the titles “Daddy” and “Mama” Bray.

After Hawaii became a U.S. territory in 1898, the Census Bureau first enumerated the islands during the 1900 Census and counted 154,001. However, communication difficulties (56.6 percent of the population over the age of 10 did not speak English), exacerbated by a plague outbreak, had significantly delayed the counting. Additionally, because previous governments had used censuses for taxation, there was a deep cultural bias against enumerators, which often erupted into violence.

The Census Bureau recognized that it had to do a better job reaching the Hawaiian people and educating them on the importance of participation ahead of the 1910 Census.



The Honolulu Advertiser
(Honolulu, HI)
12 November 1968

To this end, a group of locals representing the many languages spoken on Hawaii assembled under Dr. Victor Clark, the special agent in charge of the census. The group created lessons in various languages to disseminate at schools and other public areas in order to familiarize the people with the population, agriculture, and manufacturing schedules.



The Honolulu Advertiser (Honolulu, HI)
19 November 1953

The 1910 outreach campaign concluded as a success, although it did not completely ameliorate animosity towards the census takers. Following David’s work as a translator and special agent of the census, he moved on to work for the Lighthouse Bureau, traveling across the island trimming wicks. Over the next 40 years he would work as a chauffeur, prison guard, cook, and reformatory school teacher.

Throughout this time, David was learning more about his Hawaiian heritage. More importantly, he was teaching others about it. In 1919, he and his family started a *hula* troupe, with a goal of reviving the traditional dance that

had almost died out under the disapproving influence of 19th century missionaries. David and Lydia also taught classes on Hawaiian culture, legends, language, and songs to locals and began using these to entertain visitors. By the 1930s, they were organizing major festivals in order to showcase Hawaiian entertainers. Now considered one of the premier *kahunas* (experts) on Hawaiian culture, David eventually wrote a book, *The Kahuna Religion of Hawaii*.

In 1940, David and Lydia were able to share their love for and knowledge of Hawaiian culture with larger audiences when their daughter, Odetta, married a Hollywood director/producer, who featured David in several South Seas-themed movies. In addition to entertaining tourists and providing for the spiritual needs of Hawaiians, David traveled to the mainland to give talks about Hawaiian traditions and beliefs. Both in his work as a *kahuna*, and in his professional service as a prison guard and reform school teacher, David became a mentor to several people who would remember his positive influence in some of their most trying times.

In 1955, David became the guide to the throne room of the ‘Iolani palace, an appointment he received directly from the governor. In 1959, the Territorial House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring David for his work as a *kahuna*, and for his and his family’s



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revitalization and preservation of the ancient art of hula. Throughout the 1960’s, David focused on teaching both in Hawaii and on the mainland. He passed away on November 11, 1968, in Kailua Kona, Hawaii. David’s work throughout his life focused on raising the Hawaiian voice and uniting ancient thoughts and beliefs with the modern world. His work at the Census Bureau helped to ensure that the 1910 Census of Hawaii fully represented the Hawaiian people by communicating to them in their own language.



The Honolulu Advertiser (Honolulu, HI)
8 March 1954